

Required Report - public distribution

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## France

### Biotechnology

## French Biotech Supporters Try to Defend Test Plots from Destruction

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**Report Highlights:**

For the first time, about 50 scientists and farmers tried to protect biotech test plot from being destroyed on August 15. However, they were rapidly outnumbered, insulted and got some knocks from 550 demonstrators who destroyed 2 test plot belonging to Monsanto and to Biogemma. The French police intervened to separate the two groups, took photos and ID of the demonstrators who are expected to be called to Court in September. Several high level scientists from the French Agronomical Research Institute as well as for the first time, both French Minister of Agriculture and Research, have condemned the destructions.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
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Unscheduled Report  
Paris [FR1]  
[FR]

On August 15 and 16, about 550 demonstrators led by Green party politicians destroyed two more plots of biotech corn in Central France. The first one happened on July 2004 (See GAIN Report # FR4036 dated 8/5/2004). As for previous destructions, the event had been announced in the press. And as for previous events, the French police filmed and took photos of the demonstrators and registered their identity but did not prevent them to uproot the plants. Two demonstrators were nevertheless arrested and will be called to court on September 30 for "destruction of private property" and "rebellion". More are expected to be called to court in forthcoming weeks. One of the plot belonged to the Biogemma company (a subsidiary of the French cooperative Limagrain) while Monsanto had developed the other one. Both companies have voiced their deep concerns and announced that they will sue the demonstrators and ask for financial compensations. Biogemma also said that if the French police keep its non-intervention attitude, it might sue the State for not protecting private property.

However, for the first time, about 50 scientists and farmers tried to protect the Biogemma plot. Wearing tee-shirts labeled "stop the test plots destructions", they tried to engage discussions with the demonstrators. However, they were rapidly outnumbered. Demonstrators yelled insults and some knocks were exchanged. The French police quickly intervened to separate the two groups.

Several high level scientists from the French Agronomical Research Institute have condemned the destructions. For the first time, both French Minister of Agriculture and Research have condemned the destructions.